

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Five Times Amended) A method of operating an electronic gaming apparatus having a plurality of symbols arrayed in separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows on a touch screen [its] monitor comprising the steps of:

selecting initial symbols to be arrayed in said separate boxes of said multiple symbol columns and rows on said touch screen monitor;

displaying the initial symbols selected in an array of separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor;

allowing the player to designate a chosen number, from none to all, of said initial displayed symbols for replacement by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen;

selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols;

replacing said chosen number of initial symbols on said monitor with replacement symbols;

determining whether said replacement symbols and any remaining initial symbols arrayed in said separate boxes of said multiple symbol columns and rows constitute a winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

6. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein only one symbol can be [is] designated for replacement.

7. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein multiple symbols can be [are] designated for replacement.

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9. (Amended) The method of claim 1 [8] wherein said touch screen box lights up when the player designates its symbol for replacement [winning combinations are determined by evaluating the symbols displayed across one or more rows].

10. (Amended) The method of claim 5 [8] wherein the player can touch an instruction on said touch screen to indicate that none of the initial symbols should be replaced [winning combinations are determined by evaluating the symbols displayed across one or more columns].

11. (Amended) The method of claim 1 [8] wherein after the player has designated the chosen number of symbols to be replaced, the player touches an instruction to actuate replacement of the chosen number of symbols [said initial and replacement symbols are selected by generating random numbers and comparing those random numbers to numbered positions on a list of symbols].

12. (Amended) The method of claim 9 [1] wherein the player can undesignated a symbol for replacement by touching that designated symbol or its box a second time [said initial and replacement symbols are selected by choosing symbols from a fixed position on a periodically shuffled list of symbols].

15. (Thrice Amended) The method of claim 11 [13] wherein said instruction to actuate replacement is located on said touch screen [said replacement symbol is replaced at the player's option if it is the same as the initial symbol it replaces].

16. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1 [13] wherein a symbol is immediately replaced as soon as the player touches said symbol or its box on said touch screen monitor [said replacement symbol will be automatically replaced if it is the same as the initial symbol it replaces].

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17. (Amended) The method of claim 11 [6] wherein said instruction to actuate replacement is located on a button residing outside said touch screen [all symbols which are the same as the one symbol designated for replacement are also replaced].

18. (Five Times Amended) A method of operating an electronic gaming apparatus having a plurality of symbols and background colors arrayed in separate boxes of multiple columns and rows on a touch screen [its] monitor comprising the steps of:

selecting initial symbols and initial background colors for said symbols to be so arrayed in said separate boxes of said multiple columns and rows on said touch screen monitor;

allowing the player to designate a chosen number, from none to all, of said initial symbols and initial background colors for replacement by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen;

selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols and background colors;

replacing said chosen number of initial symbols and initial background colors on said monitor with replacement symbols and replacement background colors; and,

determining whether said replacement symbols and replacement background colors, together with any remaining initial symbols and initial background colors arrayed in said separate boxes of said multiple columns and rows, constitute a winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

20. (Four Times Amended) An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:

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a touch screen monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols arrayed in separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows;

a memory which stores a list of possible symbols to be displayed on said monitor;

a microprocessor to select symbols from said memory for display on said monitor and to determine whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a winning or losing game;

a first switch to initiate game play by causing the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols and display those initial symbols arrayed in separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,

a second switch to complete game play by allowing the player to choose for replacement from none to all of said initial symbols by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen and have said microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols from a list of possible symbols in said memory and then display on said monitor said replacement symbols together with any remaining initial symbols to create said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows.

27. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20 wherein said touch screen box lights up when the player designates its symbol for replacement [further including a touch screen which is electronically connected to said microprocessor].

28. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 27 wherein the player can touch an instruction on said touch screen to indicate that none of the initial symbols should be replaced [said first and second switches appear on said touch screen and can be activated simply by touching the region of the touch screen in which they appear].

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29. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20 wherein only one symbol can be [is] chosen for replacement.

30. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20 wherein multiple symbols can be [are] chosen for replacement.

32. (Amended) An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:

a touch screen monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows;

a memory which stores a list of possible symbols to be displayed on said monitor;

a microprocessor to select symbols from said memory for display on said monitor and to determine whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a winning or losing game by assessing whether particular symbols are aligned horizontally, vertically, diagonally or in another geometric pattern which matches a predetermined winning combination;

a first switch to initiate game play by causing the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols and display those initial symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,

a second switch to complete game play by allowing the player to choose for replacement from none to all of said initial symbols by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen monitor and have said microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols from a list of possible symbols in said memory and then display on said monitor said replacement symbols together with any remaining initial symbols to create said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows.

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34. (Amended) An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:

a touch screen monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows;

a memory which stores a list of possible symbols to be displayed on said monitor;

a microprocessor to select symbols from said memory for display on said monitor and to determine whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a winning or losing game;

a first switch to initiate game play by causing the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols and, after using a simulated spinning motion, display those initial symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,

a second switch to complete game play by allowing the player to choose for replacement from none to all of said initial symbols by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen and have said microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols from a list of possible symbols in said memory and then display on said monitor, after using a simulated spinning motion, said replacement symbols together with any remaining initial symbols to create said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows.

36. (Amended) An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:

a touch screen monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows so as to appear to be on a plurality of vertical reels;

a memory which stores a list of possible symbols to be displayed on said monitor;

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a microprocessor to select symbols from said memory for display on said monitor and to determine whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a winning or losing game;

a first switch to initiate game play by causing the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols and display those initial symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,

a second switch to complete game play by allowing the player to choose for replacement from none to all of said initial symbols by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen and have said microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols from a list of possible symbols in said memory and then display on said monitor said replacement symbols together with any remaining initial symbols to create said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows.